

# The Michigan Daily

Seventy-nine years of editorial freedom

Edited and managed by students of the University of Michigan

420 Maynard St., Ann Arbor, Mich.

News Phone: 764-0552

Editorials printed in The Michigan Daily express the individual opinions of staff writers or the editors. This must be noted in all reprints.

FRIDAY, MARCH 13, 1970

NIGHT EDITOR: ROB BIER

## Lifting of the suspension: A temporary victory

SA DEAN William Hays' decision yesterday to revoke the summary suspension of SDS member Robert Parsons constitutes only a temporary victory in the fight for democratic judicial procedures at the University.

The struggle for the permanent establishment of the rights of students to due process and trial by a jury of their peers must now be continued.

Hays' decision to revoke the suspension of Parsons was made only under the pressure of a sit-in by 300 angry students, and only in the light of new evidence that Parsons was not the demonstrator who struck engineering Prof. John Young at the demonstration against General Electric recruiters Feb. 18.

The kind of dramatic student action used yesterday should not have been necessary to insure Parsons his right to fair treatment. And his guilt or innocence of the charge is basically irrelevant to the issues at hand.

No single person — Dean Hays or anyone else — should have the power to suspend a student (or a faculty member for that matter). And no group of individuals — certainly not the executive committee of the literary college — should have the power to order a suspension

without giving the accused a fair hearing.

Nonetheless, all of these horrors were perpetrated against Bob Parsons. And while Parsons' suspension has been rescinded, Dean Hays has refused to renounce the mechanism which made it possible.

THE RIGHTS of every student remain in jeopardy as long as these repressive powers remain in the hands of the deans and governing faculties of the schools and colleges.

In the University community, only students should be allowed to try other students on charges which do not directly relate to academic competence.

Continuance of the present powers of the faculty over student conduct will only mean the perpetuation of a system which allows professors to impose their non-academic values on the students.

Students — and those faculty members with a sense of justice — must continue their constant vigil over the rights of students. And they must continue to press for a re-ordering of University disciplinary procedures that gives the students control over their own conduct.

—MARTIN HIRSCHMAN  
Editor

## GM belongs to the people

WHILE THE UNIVERSITY is an academic institution, it does not stand aloof from the influence and power of the automotive industry. Unlike the hundreds of thousands of families in South-eastern Michigan whose livelihood is directly dependent on the fortunes of corporations like General Motors, the University has a great deal more freedom. However, ties do exist, albeit in a more subtle form.

In financial terms alone, the University is a major beneficiary — and dependent — of the automotive industry. The University owns — at current prices — about \$2,485,000 in automotive stocks, including approximately 28,000 shares of GM and 12,500 shares of Ford Motor Co. Moreover, auto makers presently contribute \$39,028 for various University research projects. Another \$152,635 has been contributed by other organizations for research dealing with automotive-related problems.

It is obvious that the existence of corporations like General Motors effects the interests of the University. It is also obvious that the University, as a major shareholder of GM and other automotive stocks, should actively assert itself in the formulation of GM's policy. This is a responsibility which the University has either refused to accept or has simply ignored.

THIS SHIRKING of responsibility can no longer be tolerated. While the University has passively accepted GM and other automotive stocks as a "good investment," GM has actively — and intentionally — pursued policies which are destructive to both mankind and the environment.

According to consumer expert Ralph Nader, GM, "by virtue of the engines it produces and the plants it operates . . . contributes about 35 per cent of the nation's air pollution by tonnage." Furthermore, the \$15 million the company spends each year for research and development of less polluting engines represents less than a drop in the ocean of mammoth GM — whose 1969 gross of \$24 billion was larger than the gross national product of many nations in the world.

BUT GM IS MORE than an environmental menace, it is a people menace too. Aside from having its share of defense and weapons contracts, GM often acts against the interest of its own workers and citizens at large. Nader points out that "GM's huge financing arm, General Motors Acceptance Corporation, according to Congressional testimony, engages in deceptive, usurious and exploitative practices in its service to the parent corporation . . ."

General Motors has a history of opposing innovations which would be in the consumers' interests. GM has resisted designs which would insure the safety of automobile drivers and limit the amount of damages incurred in low speed collisions. GM has resisted the development of mass transit systems which would alleviate urban congestion and air pollution and also the tremendous drain on the nation's resources which the building of superhighways demands. GM resisted the implementation of collapsible steering columns for fifty years — whose absence in automobiles until 1967 is estimated to have fatally injured over 200,000 Americans.

Furthermore, says Nader, "the market power that is synonymous with GM has propelled the (automotive) industry toward attenuated competition or collusion over design and marketing practices."

ASSUMING this institution does not wish to divest itself of its GM stock, doesn't the University, with its 28,000 proxies want to voice any opposition to GM's policies. Apparently not. According to the administration's investment officer R. G. Griffith, "normally we vote according to the company's policies—we've had no occasion to depart from the policy in the past."

At a time when increasing numbers of people are taking moral stands on political issues, it seems odd that the University community finds itself unwilling to protest GM's activities.

As long as the University continues to passively assent to GM's policies, it must share in the guilt that are the consequences of GM's actions.

Nader and a number of other individuals have begun a project known as Campaign GM which is appealing to the nearly 1.5 million GM shareholders to use their proxies to reverse the destructive direction which the corporation's present directors are intent on pursuing.

Campaign GM, run by the Project on Corporate Responsibility, is trying to influence GM from the top down — a relatively small group of people hope to wrest control of the management of the corporation. They then hope to change GM's charter to limit the business purposes of the corporation to those activities which "are not detrimental to the public health, safety and welfare."

If it is possible to stop the damage GM does to this country without changing its fundamental corporate structure — whether it is a private or public corporation — remains to be seen. Perhaps the very concept of a corporation is no longer viable for fulfilling society's needs.

Certainly, however, the University's cooperation with Campaign GM will be less destructive than the policy it now pursues, and it may be the first step to insuring that corporations like GM are for people. Shareholders of GM stock, especially institutions like the University, must, through their proxies force GM to reorient its priorities to socially constructive ends.

—STUART GANNES  
Editorial Director

# GM: An example of excessive power

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Ralph Nader will be speaking at the University Saturday in connection with the Environmental Teach-in.)

By RALPH NADER

TODAY is announced an effort to develop a new kind of citizenship around an old kind of private government—the large corporation. It is an effort which rises from the shared concern of many citizens over the role of the corporation in American society and the uses of its complex powers. It is an effort which is dedicated toward developing a new constituency for the corporation that will harness these powers for the fulfillment of a broader spectrum of democratic values.

Ours is a corporate society. Corporations produce, process and market most of the goods and services in the nation. They constitute the most powerful, consistent and coordinated power grid that shapes the actions of men in private and public sectors. Yet, far less is known about the actual operations of the giant corporations than any other institution in America, including the national security agencies.

The diverse impacts of corporate actions on citizens, however, are being felt and described in their torment. These impacts are not catalogued in company annual reports whose style of aggregate, numerical evaluation of company gains and losses has been mirrored by similarly parochial governmental and scholarly assessments. Instead, corporate imprints are reflecting themselves in growing violence to our air, water and soil environments, in imbalanced consumer and producer technologies that harm their users and dehumanize their operators, in the colossal waste and depreciation of consumer goods and services and in the moloch-like devouring of a society's resources to the detriment of sane and humane allocation of these resources to meet the needs of all the people by superior distribution and innovation. In other negative ways—through the power of avoidance — corporate power centers can condition or determine whether other forces will unjustly prevail over the expression of weaker but more legitimate interests in peace and justice.

For most citizens there can be no rejection of nor escape from the corporate embrace. There can only be submission or control in varying degrees. The choice is

between increasing predation or increasing accountability of corporate power to the people. As a bureaucratic structure, the corporation is here to stay and whether it comes in private, public, utility or Comsat-type dress is less important than the dynamic relationship with its total constituency. The paramount goal should include the establishment of enduring access for affected social and individual interests, and through remedy against unjust treatment.

THROUGHOUT THE past century, the major forms of curbing the excesses of corporate power have been external pressures and stimuli from government and labor. As confronting organizations, however, government and labor groups did not possess the stamina, motivation and generic nourishment that the corporation displayed to keep its opponents at bay or accommodate their vulnerabilities. While overcoming the regulatory state and adjusting to the narrow goals of organized labor, the modern corporation increased its direct power, and, through an imbalanced use of complex technology, its indirect power over citizens. Now mere inaction, mere forbearance, and weak havoc on the health, safety and well-being of people.

The corporate quest for control of its operating environment has led industry and commerce to narrow or virtually eliminate the range of quality competition in contrast to non-price and/or trivia-intended competition. The same quest has led to endemic violation of anti-trust and other economic laws and produced greater and greater concentrations of corporate power. The intricate evolution of the legal structure of the corporation permits the increasing exercise of personal power accompanied by institutional, not personal, responsibility at the most. The corporate shield absorbs the rare enforcement of the law, not the official(s) whose decisions or negligence led to the violation. In addition, the ownership and management of the corporation have become separated and the ease of even the largest investors in exiting reduces any remaining incentives for owners to exercise voice and guide or discipline management. Clearly the gap between cor-

porate performance and corporate responsibility is steadily enlarged by these aforementioned patterns. Just as clearly, a new definition of the corporation's constituency and its activation is needed.

WITH ITS MASSIVE size and pervasiveness, General Motors is a leading candidate for the attentions of its assertive constituency — consumers, labor, dealers, suppliers, insurance companies and all citizens who experience the forced consumption of its air pollution and other environmental spillages. Nearly a million and a half of these citizens and institutions are shareholders in the company. In theory they own the company: in fact they have about the same rights as the owner of company debentures. The procedures, the information, the organization, the manpower and the funds are management's to deploy. But the fiction of shareholder democracy continues to plague the reality. By highlighting the fiction a new reality can be borne that will tame the corporate tiger.

And verily, a tiger is General Motors. By virtue of the engines it produces and the plants it operates, the company contributes about 35 per cent of the nation's air pollution by tonnage. Its hourly average gross, around the clock, of \$2.4 million has not discouraged the company from spending last year less than \$15 million on research and development for less polluting engines. Grossing more than any single governmental budget, except that of the USA and the USSR, GM, with its 1969 gross of some \$24 billion, still cannot find the will to build the greatly safer automobiles that can be built economically by free engineers.

The company continues to lead the way in designs that pile up enormous and avoidable property damage in low speed (under 10 mph) collisions and increase its aftermarket replacement sales as a result. The company is a charter member of the highway lobby that has opposed successfully the development of mass transit systems and pushed highways through cities and suburbs in the most indiscriminate manner of land use planning. The market power that is synonymous with GM has propelled the industry toward attenuated competition or

collusion over design and marketing practices. Innovation has been creatively stayed to the consumer's harm and economic detriment. GM's huge financing arm, General Motors Acceptance Corporation, according to Congressional testimony, engages in deceptive, usurious and exploitative practices in its service to the parent corporation. Secrecy, obfuscation and contracts of adhesion characterize the techniques used to render consumers impotent in remedy for their complaints. These are only the surface references to GM's imprint but they suggest a ferocity of acquisitiveness which could render an optimist euphoric at the prospect of transforming such motivational velocities for man instead of against man.

WHAT IS EMERGING from closer study of companies such as General Motors is that the most intractable obstacles to change for man are not technical at all but are more often associated with rigidities of a bureaucratic and personal nature rather than an economic incapacity of loss. The half century of delay in installing a collapsible steering column was quite probably due to the vested interest of an authoritarian psychology than to the more conventionally adduced reasons. When the decision was made for the 1967 model cars that the collapsible steering column was "in", it was finally decided that in any collision between man and column, prudence dictated that the column should give, not the man's rib cage. This microscopic episode illustrates the enormous power in the hands of those who decide manufacturing priorities and product designs (the ramrod steering column is estimated to have fatally injured over 200,000 American since 1900). They need assistance in making such decisions along the entire continuum of impacts on people. A few years ago, the company produced many advertisements with the headline "GM IS PEOPLE". It is time to amend the caption to "GM IS FOR PEOPLE". In addition, GM is continually violating laws, including air pollution and safety laws, and it is time for shareholders to voice their concern here. For as has been said, shareholders are harmed as consumers and citizens by the very activities that they own in part.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

# Students condemn Honors Convocation

To the Editor:

The following is a copy of a letter sent to Pres. Robben Fleming:

FRIDAY, MARCH 20, is the date of the University's annual Honors Convocation. The purpose of this assembly is to honor scholastic achievement and success. With this purpose lies an assumption that a high grade point reflects acquisition of knowledge. The University means well in honoring such achievement, although it is somewhat ironic that in order to recognize classroom success, it cancels the very classes in which learning is assumed to have taken place. We believe that what the Honors Convocation does indeed do, however, (besides making various parents happy and proud) is to give recognition to those students who, by socialization or natural inclination, are able to perform well within the system. Such performance is far from being synonymous with greatest knowledge or learning. Further, even those of us who find the system of testing, grading, etc., adequate for ourselves, recognize that such is not the situation for many others and feel the University must find other approaches and greater flexibility.

—Ellen P. April '70  
—Andrew Hoffman '71  
—Jan Maisel '71  
March 12

An area of especially high priority is that of minority admissions.

We therefore urge the abolition of the convocation. The purpose of this request is two-fold:

—To demonstrate that those who achieve high grade-points do so secondarily, their purpose being to learn; and

—To demand a re-ordering of academic priorities. We believe that the energy and money (invitations, programs, tea, etc.) used for the convocation could better and more meaningfully be used in a financial aid fund; those who have benefitted from the system giving the same opportunity to others.

The Friday morning when classes are cancelled would be an appropriate time for an open forum on the many problems facing the University community: recruitment policies, minority admissions, etc., etc. Serious debate on these issues is certainly more important than a self-congratulatory honors convocation.

—Ellen P. April '70  
—Andrew Hoffman '71  
—Jan Maisel '71  
March 12

## Referendum

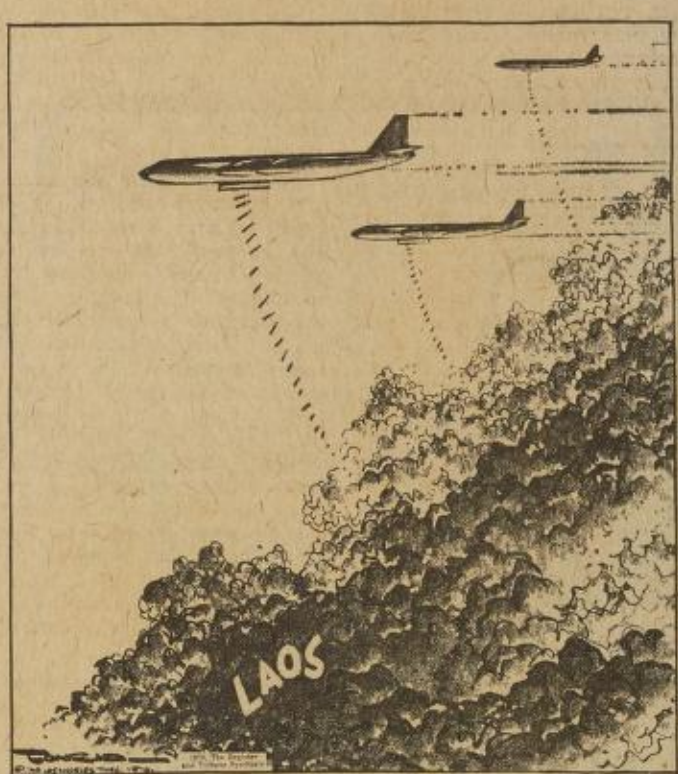
To the Editor:

I PRESUME MOST persons have wondered why we cannot have a federal referendum, but there seems to be no provision in the U.S. Constitution for such a referendum, which everyone no doubt would like to use to get us out of the Vietnam mess.

Because Nixon wants us to stay in Vietnam (he doesn't say that, but we know it anyway), it seems necessary to devise a practical way to secure a Vietnam referendum privilege; it seems to me that we ought to use the Michigan Initiative Petition facet of our State Constitution to order all of our Congressmen (and Congresswomen) to submit a law to our National Congress for such a referendum ordering the soldiers to be brought home immediately, and in addition, that all of our Congressmen be ordered to vote in support of it in the name of the people of the State of Michigan, irrespective of their personal feelings.

I did write Sen. Phil Hart some time ago and he seemed unwilling to delegate such a privilege to ordinary people.

—Lewis C. Ernst  
March 11



"... Because our bombing runs over North and South Vietnam were so successful in containing Communist aggression ..."

# Fasting: An alternative to disruptions?

By MICHAEL DAVIS  
Daily Guest Writer

THE UNIVERSITY has been unable to handle its problems any better than society has been able to handle its own. It has not been, because it has not tried to handle them any differently. Inside and outside the University, we converse politically in threats, slogans, police charges, bricks and jail sentences.

The University is no more able to handle its problems today than it was two, three, or four years ago. Indeed, like society, it's today less able than it used to be. Robben Fleming, who began his presidency as a mediator, a man of persuasion, has become an administrative soldier, a man of force. Students, who once tried to treat humanely those they confronted for their rights, have become almost as cruel, instrumentalist, and warlike as the administration they face, without patience, empathy or respect for human weakness.

I have written against this degeneration several times. I've had people compliment me on my articles and letters, say they agreed with what I said, and then go off to do the opposite of what they agreed with. My words have not changed other people's actions. I now mean to see whether by action I can do more.

ABOUT 9:00 A.M., Tuesday, March 17, I will enter the Administration Building, carrying a sleeping bag, a bottle of fruit juice, notebook, and copy of Kant's Critique of Judgment. I will sit down somewhere in the first floor hall out of everyone's way, put up a sign explaining what I'm doing, and begin a fast that will last till the Regents' meeting that Friday afternoon. I would like to have some com-

pany to help pass the time, especially the long evening hours.

I will be carrying a sleeping bag because I want to sleep in the Administration Building at night (and because I want a soft place to sit during the day). I do not intend civil disobedience, and I will not be violating any SGC rule, since I won't be in anybody's way. I won't be guilty of trespass unless some administrator orders me to leave. If I am asked or ordered to leave the building at any time, I will respectfully refuse. But if I am carried from the building, I won't resist and won't go farther than I am carried. Then, as soon as I can, I will return to my place inside the building.

If arrested, I won't resist, won't cooperate, and will continue the fast in jail. I ask that, if I am arrested, no one, student or faculty, bail me out. If I am sent to jail by order of an administrator then I will stay in jail until the jailers get tired of me or until the administrator who ordered my arrest regrets it.

I WILL BE FASTING to win approval, without substantial change, of the student-faculty-proposed Chapter Seven of the Regents Bylaws. I've chosen this issue for five reasons.

First, the issue is clear: the right of the overwhelming majority of the University community, students, to govern themselves democratically.

Second, the issue is important for students. The right to self-government is a human right. Though we are quick to stand up for other people's rights, and slow to stand up for our own (as if people had to be poor to be oppressed), we nevertheless are human, have human rights, and may properly try to make sure they're recognized.

Third, the issue is important for the University. The battle for the substance of Chapter Seven has gone on nearly a decade. Students and administrators are losing their composure. Since students can not be expected to renounce their rights as human beings, either the administration will adopt Chapter Seven or confrontation will get rougher and more frequent. Violence here would be good for nobody, but it would be especially bad for the University, shattering what remains of our sense of community.

Fourth, it doesn't seem likely the Regents will pass Chapter Seven as proposed, unless students intervene in the decision making in some way. The amendments the Regents have so far proposed to Chapter Seven indicate little understanding of the University, or show a conservatism so unreflective that no amount of mere talk could shake it.

Fifth, the intervention students are likely to engage in now — a mass confrontation in which each side treats the other as a sworn enemy — is exactly the sort of political activity I want to find an alternative to. The Regents need help, not a shower of stones.

Fasting seems the appropriate response for several reasons:

—Fasting hurts no one but the faster (and doesn't hurt him very much);

—Fasting is hard enough to prove that I am serious about the issue. Making demands, shouting slogans at a meeting, even voting in a referendum, are much easier acts, and so acts not as likely to be judged signs of deeply-held conviction;

Fasting because it's rarely used, is dramatic enough to attract attention, and yet does not distract attention from the chosen issue;

—Fasting can be done individually; and

—Fasting has symbolism that is appropriate to the issue. I'll fast because my rights as a human being are at least as important to me as food.

I AM NOT undertaking this fast lightly (though, in spite of being five-foot-ten, I only weigh a hundred-thirty-five pounds). I have thought about it over a month, tried shorter fasts, and know this fast is going to be hard. I do not expect to be comfortable sitting and sleeping on bricks covered by a sleeping bag.

But I do undertake the fast without complaint. It is an experiment to see whether there are alternatives to violence. If the Regents do not respond as I hope, I will have learned something, though not what I wanted to. If the Regents do respond as I hope, I will have learned what I wanted to and will have made the University a better place at the same time. Either way, I will have tried to live out my beliefs in practice and be more certain of myself for having tried.

I hope others will join me in one way or another. We are all looking for a way out of an absurdity and persuasive actions like fasting are worth investigating. The absurdity, of course, is this: Our society seems to need a revolutionary transformation. The only revolutionary means are those that change society for the better. Violence does not seem to have ever changed society for the better (though it may sometimes have kept it from getting worse). But we are told these days — and need to disprove — that social change can only be made through violence. If so, then revolution is impossible and our society is incapable of making the necessary changes.

# The Michigan Daily

MARTIN A. HIRSCHMAN, Editor

STUART GANNES, Editorial Director  
JUDY SARASOHN, Managing Editor  
JIM NEUBACHER, News Editor  
NADINE COHODAS, Feature Editor  
ALEX CANADY, Editorial Page Editor  
BRUCE LEVINE, Editorial Page Editor  
H. A. PERRY, Arts Director  
LAURIE HARRIS, Arts Page Editor  
JUDY KAHN, Personnel Director  
DAN ZWERDLING, Magazine Editor